

tapestries are very similar to many of his designs for ironwork and armour: a triumphal car on these tapestries is, it was said, a striking example of this similarity in its florid German Gothic character. The inscriptions in the French language would not, he considered, influence this view, as it was the court language of the time. The notice of these extraordinary productions was concluded by suggesting the necessity for repeated and close examinations, in order to become acquainted with their time-worn and faded excellencies. The bright light of a sunny day, it was said, is now requisite to unfold some of their many admirable qualities and superior attractions of form, but in taking any portion separately there would always be found merit simply repaying the trouble of investigation. Other tapestries under the music gallery in the great hall were alluded to, and it was stated that, for the study of drapery, there cannot be found a finer collection, containing, as it does, representatives of almost every school, from the angularity of early art to the round freedom of a Rubens.

After some remarks on the painted decorations upon the walls of the Queen's staircase, the celebrated frieze by Andrea Mantegna, illustrative of the triumphs of Julius Cæsar, was referred to: it occupies the entire length of a gallery on one side of the fountain court, and consists of nine distinct compositions. Owing to the limited width of this gallery, the whole cannot be adequately estimated, as scarcely more than a third part can be seen at one view. It was designed to be placed considerably above the eye, and hence it is arranged without a perspective plane—two circumstances offering useful hints to the painters of the frescoes in the new House of Lords. The subjects, it was stated, exhibit excellent studies for the historical painter, the designer, and the artificer. The reader alluded to the perfect manner in which various portions have been embodied; and he contended, that, in every figure and ornament there is something to admire: the refinement of sculpture, with the richness and freedom of colour, are evident, each figure being impressed with the motion and business of the scene; the conceptions generally being vitalized with an air of truthfulness,—the groups follow each other in a picturesque manner—the victor's spoils are borne in triumphant display—instruments of war jostle those of peace—the warrior and the musician, men, women, and children, form, in natural array, an excited throng, and this long train of figures terminates with Cæsar seated upon a magnificent car, and wearing an expression of serene dignity and absolute power. Attention was also directed to the ornamental devices which enrich the armour, trappings of elephants and horses, trophies, costumes and vases, as being all well drawn, with the spirit of a strong feeling for graceful forms. For purposes of general utility in the arts, it was said, that this frieze is unequalled by any work in this country, and yet no engravings or lithographs of it are in circulation. They would appear, it was said, to have been strangely neglected, when it is considered that the ornamental details alone would constitute a beautiful volume of early Italian art, a class, at present, almost unrepresented. It was to be regretted that these distemper paintings should be so situated as to be liable to the influence of damp, which is evidently causing the colours to peel off. He urged the necessity of requesting evidence to be taken as to the condition of these paintings even eight years ago, and now, within a few paces, is the gallery containing the celebrated cartoons of Raffaele. The gallery itself received particular consideration, as it was observed, so much has already been written and said about the cartoons, that it would be either presumptuous or unnecessary to dilate upon their excellence. This interior was designed by Wren to receive the cartoons. It is of a great length, which, with reference to the width, offers an exaggerated proportion, seldom detected in the arrangements by this celebrated architect. The walls are divided into seven compartments, to admit the cartoons, and are covered with oak panelling, enriched by Corinthian pilasters and embellishments, such as wreaths carved by Gibbons: the doorways at each end are picturesquely designed, and the

general effect is quiet and good, but perhaps more gloomy than need be; nevertheless, it was contended, the gallery is altogether unfit to contain the cartoons. They had been designed by Raffaele to be seen within a foot or two of the eye, and it is objectionable to have them placed, as now, above 12 feet from it. The light, received from windows lower than the cartoons, falls upon the lower portion only, whilst the skies, which should receive the greater share, are in shadow. An opportunity, however, it was said, exists, whereby the objection may be modified. Above the windows are the lunettes, containing the frescoes, seen from Fountain-court, and it was asked why should not these be broken through? It was also remarked, that if the cartoons could be properly seen, if the eye could rest upon their manifold beauties instead of looking up at them, they would soon be better known and appreciated by the crowds who now, heedlessly and unconcernedly, wander past them. The Royal Academy, supposed to be the guardian of art in this country, ought, it was said, to look to such matters. Notwithstanding which, an individual opinion may possibly produce an echo, when the ideas expressed are something beyond mere fault finding.

#### IMPROVEMENTS IN DWELLINGS FOR THE MIDDLE CLASSES.

THE necessities and requirements of the middle classes, in a domestic and sanitary point of view, have been often treated of, but cannot be too often urged. It must not be supposed, because this body is not steeped to the ears in poverty, that they have no cause for complaint as to the state of their abodes. Believe me, the evils in this respect with them are quite as bad as are those of the labouring masses, and perhaps worse, from the very fact of the difference in their positions.

I include in the term middle classes all whose incomes are limited, and who move in a superior sphere, holding situations of trust and confidence, and bound accordingly to appear as gentlemen. Many of this class consist of those who were once wealthy, associating with the highest of the land, but, through misfortunes, have been reduced. Every one knows that the man with a small income in London, and other large cities, is compelled to have recourse to apartments for himself and family, for two reasons. First, because rent and taxes are high; and, secondly, because suitable houses are not to be met with. If he should have the courage to take a house, the rent is much higher than he can afford, consequently, he makes up his mind to let a portion, thereby sacrificing his wished-for privacy and domestic comforts. This experiment he tries for the sake of having a home he can call his own; but, after a time, he finds it will not do. The house is given up; apartments are taken at a rent suited to his income, but with diminished comforts and conveniences to his family, as he cannot afford to have the number of rooms he really requires, the charges being exorbitant; indeed, a floor, consisting of two or three rooms, is his ultimatum—small, ill ventilated, and without a single convenience but what is in common with the other lodgers. All this is to be borne with, for there is no choice. After the business of the day is over he returns home, depressed in mind and body, but, alas! it is no home to him; his ears are assailed with the annoyances which his family have met with in the course of the day, from various causes; the closet smells offensively, and the drains are no better. What is to be done? The landlord, who lives in the kitchen, must be spoken to on the subject: he affirms there is no cause of complaint, it is all imaginary, or very likely that it arises from the carelessness of his (the tenant's) own family. Again, the poor man is informed by his better half that the coals are gone: she cannot understand it, she is sure they are stolen. The coal-cellar is under the kitchen stairs, with no lock on the door. He hints to the good man his landlord about a lock: the reply is, does he think that people are thieves? perhaps he had better leave if he is not satisfied. All this he puts up with; not to mention having his friends, when they call, insulted by the people on the ground floor, who reply to their

knock or ring, as the case may be. The chimney smokes, his furniture is spoiled; the windows are obliged to be left open in the midst of January; his wife has the toothache, his daughter takes cold, is confined to her bed; the doctor is called in, who declares it to be a fever. The house is decidedly unhealthy; notice is given, and he leaves, only to undergo the same evils at a different address.

This is a sad picture, but it is what the reduced gentleman, the single lady with an annuity, the struggling professional man, the banker's or merchant's clerk, and many others, have to undergo daily.

Does the married man, who employs this poor gentleman and such of his class, and with whom he daily comes in contact, ever for a moment reflect upon the great evil he is inflicting in the advances he makes upon such property? I doubt it; and may I ask why is it so, when he is told that it would be a good spec to invest some of his capital in the erection of superior dwellings for the middle classes? they are much wanted, it could not fail to answer. Paris has such, and so has Scotland her flats (floors), and they pay well, and are fully occupied: why should it not be so here? "Ah! it is all very well in these countries," he replies, "we are a differently constituted people; it may suit them, but it would not do for John Bull: he is too much of a domesticated animal to relish such an arrangement: an Englishman likes to have his own castle to himself" (*ergo*, his three ill-ventilated rooms), and so with such crude and ignorant motives he dismisses the subject from his mind. The truth is, that he is thoroughly stubborn on the matter, and will not take the trouble to set himself right; he knows nothing of what his managing man, cashier, or clerks, with large families, have to endure when they leave his counting-house; they daily appear before him well dressed, and apparently as comfortable as himself,—I say apparently, for he looks no further than the surface.

When he speaks so largely of the Englishman's home as his castle, he only thinks of his own splendid snug mansion in Russell-square, or some such *localité*, with all the *écarteras* thereunto belonging: it is well for him to talk so. Let your pages, Sir, undeceive him; lift the curtain, that he may look upon the real picture with all its deformities. Tell him of the silent uncomplaining sufferings of those moving daily around him: convince him that they have as much claim upon him as the sturdy beggar who trumpets his woes at the corner of the street. I am sure that, as an Englishman, he has a warm heart, and will respond to the call, more especially as he will be a gainer by the act: it only needs a beginning, others will follow.

Let buildings be erected upon the same principle as the model dwellings for the poor labourer and mechanic, but on a more extensive and complete scale, with superior fittings and conveniences, every floor to contain within itself all the appliances of a separate house, well lighted, and ventilated. Such an arrangement as this would be hailed as a blessing by thousands. They would not remain long unoccupied, and would put a speedy stop to the further erection of such miserable and inconvenient cribs as are springing up in and around London. W. S.

THE ARCHITECT'S, SURVEYOR'S, AND BUILDER'S ALMANACK.—A useful almanack for all classes in the building trade has just been published under the above head. It has been compiled with care by Mr. Geary, and contains, in addition to all the necessary information of an almanack, a list of her Majesty's Commissioners of Woods and Forests, a list of the official referees and examiners of candidates for districts under the Buildings Act, a list of the district surveyors, their offices, and the extent of the districts. A scale of the fees for new buildings and alterations. The whole of the clauses in the Building Act, condensed. An abstract of the Chimney Act. An abstract of the Paving Act. A schedule of stamps chargeable on valuations of estates and dilapidations, &c.;—the whole forming a useful appendage for the office or the counting-house. A little additional elegance of form in succeeding editions is desirable.